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SUBJECT: INDIA READY FOR REGIONAL RADIOLOGICAL SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

1. (SBU) Summary: In a trilateral meeting with USG and IAEA officials on February 9, the GOI agreed to join the Regional Radiological Security Partnership (RRSP); identified a lead technical contact within the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE); offered to serve as a venue for radiological security training and to continue its cooperation with the IAEA on radiological safety training; proposed to participate in specific missions to address orphaned radiological sources; and suggested that the IAEA host a working-level meeting with the GOI and DOE in April to develop a plan for these and other related activities. This initiative was useful in reminding India's scientific establishment that there are significant areas of US-India collaboration on nuclear matters, even within the constraints established by US law and policy. End Summary.

GOI Ready for Radiological Partnership

2. (U) In her opening remarks in the trilateral USG-GOI-IAEA meeting on February 9, MEA Additional Secretary (International Security) Meera Shankar outlined examples of India's expertise and willingness to work internationally to recover radiological material (e.g., in the Republic of Georgia), as well as to provide training in radiological security and safety in partnership with the IAEA and other parties such as the US. While supporting bilateral initiatives like DOE's Global Threat Reduction Initiative, throughout the meeting, Shankar and other GOI representatives reiterated that their work on this issue has been, and will continue to be, under the aegis of the IAEA.

3. (U) Director of the Office of Global Radiological Threat Reduction Ed McGinnis affirmed DOE's desire to partner with India and the IAEA in the area of radiological security. "India is well-positioned to be a regional leader in radiological security, especially in assisting countries that don't have India's capabilities," he said. Misuse of high-risk radioactive sources, while not resulting in mass deaths, would have significant economic, health and strategic consequences. McGinnis went on to outline the mission of the RRSP, multilateral partnerships with IAEA and Interpol, and programs to identify, secure, recover, and in some cases, replace, high-risk radioactive sources. McGinnis also highlighted the important benefit to radiological safety that would result from this initiative.

4. (U) Anita Nilsson of the IAEA reviewed the agency's two-track approach to radiological security which is to support infrastructure development and security enhancements to states upon request. IAEA also offers training and assistance to establish an effective regulatory framework to ensure sustainability. These activities are funded by voluntary contributions through member states, including in-kind contributions such as India's joint training programs.

5. (U) Dr. K. Raghuraman of the Department of Atomic Energy and Dr. SP Aggarwal of India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board presented the GOI perspective on radiological security which is comprised of four parts: 1) legislative and regulatory framework for all nuclear and radiological activities; 2) an integrated system for physical protection of nuclear and radioactive materials and facilities; 3) a comprehensive nuclear material accounting and control system; and 4) a national registry of all radioactive material.

6. (U) Focusing on GOI interest and experience in conducting international training, Nilsson expressed the need to ensure that training is both holistic and contributes to sustainability. Because of the many everyday uses of radioactive materials, securing high-risk sources requires raising security awareness among states, national and local authorities, and law enforcement, among others, and will require a widespread, holistic approach to be effective. Further, training should be linked to established educational institutions, e.g., universities, to be sustainable.

7. (U) India is most interested in providing training in the areas of security and safety, physical protection of facilities, and regulatory measures, according to Shankar.

She also asked about the location of IAEA's current radiological safety regional training centers. (According to the IAEA's Khammar Mrabit, the IAEA currently has centers in six countries: Argentina, Malaysia, Belarus, Greece, Morocco, and Syria.) Clearly interested in raising India's international profile in this area, Dr. Raghuraman noted, "We've already been acting in a regional role for training." He added that India is willing to tailor its courses for specific operations, as they did in support of the recovery of high-powered, orphaned sources in the Republic of Georgia.

18. (U) Beyond training, Shankar said the GOI was interested in offering its expertise in the areas of information management, education, and recovery operations, but the GOI would require further discussion about resource availability before committing to operations in these areas.

Next Steps

19. (U) The trilateral group agreed to meet at the invitation of the IAEA in Vienna after the IAEA Preparatory Committee meeting on the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in April. This trilateral group will develop a work program for GOI participation in the RRSP. The three parties also designated technical points of contact: Nilsson as the interim POC for the IAEA, Dr. Raghuraman for the GOI, and Dwyer for the USG. The GOI also issued a press statement on the meeting (text in para 11).

Bio Note: Dr. Raghuraman

10. (SBU) Dr. Raghuraman is favorably known to DOE, IAEA, and the Mission. Head of the International Studies Division in the Department of Atomic Energy's Strategic Planning Group, Dr. Raghuraman is a technical scientist filling a position in DAE normally reserved for an MEA foreign service officer. Raghuraman told SciCouns that MEA made an exception for his appointment because of his extensive experience in international affairs while serving as a Science Attache at the Indian Mission to the IAEA in Vienna. He is among those we are encouraging to take a more proactive view of the NSSP in the context of moving our nuclear relationship forward. In this regard, this initiative was useful in reminding India's scientific establishment that there are significant areas of US-India collaboration on nuclear matters, even within the constraints established by US law and policy.

GOI Press Statement

11. (U) Begin text:

A joint delegation of representatives from the US Department of Energy and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) visited India on 9 February 2005 for the first India-US-IAEA trilateral meeting on the Regional Radiological Security Partnership (RRSP) program.

The US and IAEA representatives welcomed India's participation in the RRSP program as a Regional Partner and discussions were held to work out the modalities of this cooperation. The three sides acknowledged their shared objective of enhancing globally the security of dangerous radioactive sources. The US and the IAEA delegates expressed appreciation for India's offer of providing infrastructure and expertise on a regular basis for conducting international training courses in India under the aegis of the IAEA on issues related to the security of radiological sources and materials as also for locating orphan radioactive sources in countries which are unable to effectively deal with them and which seek assistance from the IAEA. The three sides agreed to continue further discussions on the subject.

Participants

12. (U) US Participants:
Edward McGinnis, Director, Office of Global Radiological Threat Reduction, DOE/NNSA
Greg Dwyer, Project Manager, DOE/NNSA
Mark Soo Hoo, Project Manager, Sandia Labs
William Kenagy, Physical Scientist, State/Bureau of Nonproliferation
Stacy Gilbert, Political-Military Officer, Embassy New Delhi (notetaker)

GOI Participants:
Ms Meera Shankar, Additional Secretary (Intl Security), MEA
Dr. RB Grover, Head, Strategic Planning Group, DAE
Ms. Archana Arora, Joint Secretary, DAE
Dr. K. Raghuraman, Head, Intl Studies Division, Strategic Planning Group, DAE
Dr SP Aggarwal, Atomic Energy Regulatory Board
Ms Nutan Kapoor Mahawar, Under Secretary (DISA), MEA

IAEA Participants:

Anita Nilsson, Head, Office of Nuclear Security (NSNS), IAEA
Khammar Mrabit, Section Head, Policy and Programme Support
Section, Division of Radiation, Transport and Waste Safety
(NSRW), IAEA
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